

I CLAIM:

1. A method of compressing digital audio data and other data into an audio signal for transmission to a receiving station, comprising the steps of:
  - a. dividing the audio signal into compression blocks, each compression block consisting of a plurality of compression packets, each compression packet consisting of a plurality of words,
  - b. providing one word in each compression packet with a component of configuration data, whereby a compression block contains sufficient configuration information to identify a manner of packing data into the compression block,
  - c. tagging one word in each compression packet to identify the tagged word as a word containing configuration information,
  - d. packing compressed audio and other data into remaining space within the compression packet, and
  - e. transmitting the compression packets in a predetermined sequence to a receiving station,

wherein the receiving station constructs the configuration information from the tagged words in a compression block and decodes the compressed audio data and other data according to the configuration information.

2. The method of claim 1 in which each compression packet consists of four word pairs.
3. The method of claim 2 in which a first most significant bit of a first word pair is tagged.
4. The method of claim 3 in which a second most significant bit of the first word pair holds the component of configuration data.
5. The method of claim 2 in which each compression block consists of 48 compression packets.

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6. The method of claim 5 in which the compression information comprises synchronization information, transport identification information, and data identification information.
7. The method of claim 6 in which one or more bytes are dedicated to the synchronization information, one byte is dedicated to transport identification information and one byte is dedicated to data identification information.
8. The method of claim 2 in which each word has 24, 20 or 16 bits.
9. The method of claim 1 in which the audio data comprises a plurality of channels and is packed into the remaining space in the compression packet leaving no empty bits between channel data.
10. The method of claim 1 in which the audio data and other data comprises metadata, linear time code data and channel status data.
11. An apparatus for adding digital audio data and other data into an audio signal for transmission to a receiving station, comprising  
  
an encoder for  
  
dividing the audio signal into compression blocks, each compression block consisting of a plurality of compression packets, each compression packet consisting of a plurality of words,  
  
providing one word in each compression packet with a component of configuration data, whereby a compression block contains sufficient configuration information to identify a manner of packing data into the compression block,  
  
tagging one word in each compression packet to identify the tagged word as a word containing configuration information, and  
  
packing compressed audio and other data into remaining space within the compression packet,

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a transmitter for transmitting the compression packets in a predetermined sequence to a receiving station, and

a decoder at the receiving station for constructing the configuration information from the tagged words in a compression block and decoding the compressed audio data and other data according to the configuration information.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 in which each compression packet consists of four word pairs.
13. The apparatus of claim 12 in which a first most significant bit of a first word pair is tagged.
14. The apparatus of claim 13 in which a second most significant bit of the first word pair holds the component of configuration data.
15. The apparatus of claim 12 in which each compression block consists of 48 compression packets.
16. The apparatus of claim 15 in which the compression information comprises synchronization information, transport identification information, and data identification information.
17. The apparatus of claim 16 in which one or more bytes are dedicated to the synchronization information, one byte is dedicated to transport identification information and one byte is dedicated to data identification information.
18. The apparatus of claim 12 in which each word has 24, 20 or 16 bits.
19. The apparatus of claim 11 in which the audio data comprises a plurality of channels and is packed into the remaining space in the compression packet leaving no empty bits between channel data.
20. The apparatus of claim 11 in which the audio data and other data comprises metadata, linear time code data and channel status data.

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